

Message Text

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OPIC:JOFFUTT

NEA/ARN:DDEAN

NEA/BLC:MDRAPER

E:RPOATS (DRAFT)

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TAGS: USJOJC, EGEN, JO, US

SUBJECT: US-JORDAN JOINT COMMISSION -- WORKING GROUP ON
TRADE AND INVESTMENT

REF: (A) AMMAN 1817

1. SUMMARY - THIS MESSAGE OUTLINES PRELIMINARY
WASHINGTON RESPONSE TO EMBASSY SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM OF
TEMPORARY JOINT US-JORDAN WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND
INVESTMENT. PRIMARY PURPOSES OF WORKING GROUP SHOULD
BE TO IDENTIFY AND RECOMMEND APPROACHES TO RESOLVING

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MAJOR IMPEDIMENTS TO US-JORDAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT,

AND AD REFERENDUM DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLANS CONCERNING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OR PROJECTS WHICH COULD ATTRACT US PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION DIRECTLY AND WITH ARAB FINANCING. WE WOULD HOPE TO FOCUS DISCUSSIONS AROUND GENERAL FRAMEWORK PROPOSED BY EMBASSY IN REF A, WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OUTLINED BELOW. WASHINGTON AGENCIES BELIEVE THAT WITH THOROUGH PREPARATION IN WASHINGTON, STUDY GROUP SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETE ACTIVITIES IN JORDAN WITHIN ABOUT ONE WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. WASHINGTON AGENCIES APPRECIATE COMPREHENSIVE SUBMISSION OF EMBASSY THOUGHTS ON AIMS, ACTIVITIES, TIME-TABLE, AND COMPOSITION OF AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT TO BE FORMED UNDER AUSPICES OF US-JORDAN

JOINT COMMISSION. NSC/USC ECONOMIC SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEWED ISSUES INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT IN MEETING MARCH 27, AND FOLLOW-UP INTERAGENCY GROUP (STATE, AID, TREASURY, COMMERCE, OPIC) DISCUSSED DETAILS THEREAFTER. AT AID'S REQUEST, STATE (EB) IS TAKING THE LEAD IN FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING RESPONSE. PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO REF A DEVELOPED IN THESE TWO MEETINGS FOLLOWS.

3. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUP TRIP SHOULD BE TO STUDY AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPER ROLE OF JOINT COMMISSION IN AREAS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT, REVIEWING PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTING APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS THROUGH WHICH USG CAN BE HELPFUL IN STIMULATING INVESTMENT AND TRADE AS A PART OF OVERALL JORDANIAN DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. TO INCREASE THE POTENTIAL FOR US PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN JORDANIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, SPECIAL EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN WHICH US FIRMS CAN TAKE PART, AND TO IDENTIFY PROJECTS WHICH CAN JOIN US TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT WITH ARAB FINANCING.

4. GENERAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT IS THAT MAJOR AREAS OF ACTIVITY PROPOSED IN REF A ARE A GOOD FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT DISCUSSIONS; ADDITIONALLY, WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT ANY RESULTANT ACTIVITIES BE SOUNDLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BASED IN TERMS OF USG CAPABILITIES AND HAVE LIKELIHOOD OF PRODUCING CONCRETE RESULTS. CARE MUST BE TAKEN, HOWEVER, NOT TO RAISE JORDANIAN EXPECTATIONS FOR GREAT EXPANSION OF US-JORDAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT OR SUBSTANTIAL USG INVOLVEMENT IN INVESTMENT PROMOTION AS A RESULT OF JOINT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES.

5. REGARDING STUDY OF INVESTMENT ISSUES AS ONE MAJOR

AREA OF ACTIVITY FOR WORKING GROUP, DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE CLIMATE IN JORDAN FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT GENERALLY, THROUGH EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A BETTER INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK, WOULD BE ONE USEFUL APPROACH. ANOTHER APPROACH COULD BE ENCOURAGING USE OF PETRODOLLARS TO FINANCE INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN WHICH US COMPANIES CAN PARTICIPATE BY PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS.

6. REGARDING TIMETABLE, WASHINGTON AGENCIES FEEL THAT OBJECTIVES OF WORKING GROUP COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN CONSIDERABLY LESS TIME THAN THREE TO FOUR WEEKS. DELEGATION WOULD MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF BACKGROUND MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON, SUPPLEMENTED BY INFORMATION PROVIDED BY EMBASSY. IN ADDITION, PLANS ARE NOW BEING MADE TO DEBRIEF PARTICIPANTS IN OPIC'S TIMAN MISSION,

WHICH SHOULD ASSIST WASHINGTON AGENCIES IN ASSESSING CURRENT TRADE AND INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN JORDAN.

7. REGARDING COMPOSITION OF WORKING GROUP, WE AGREE THAT WASHINGTON TEAM BE KEPT SMALL, WITH TRADE AND INVESTMENT EXPERTS FROM AMONG STATE, OPIC, COMMERCE, TREASURY, AND POSSIBLY OTHER PARTICIPANTS. ACTUAL DESIGNATION OF TEAM WILL BE MADE AFTER WE HAVE COMPLETED MORE DETAILED SURVEY OF ISSUES TO BE STUDIED BY GROUP. CONSIDERING HOST OF LEGAL PROBLEMS, AND PRELIMINARY NATURE OF TALKS, WE FEEL THAT INCLUSION OF PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES ON AD HOC WORKING GROUP NOT ADVISABLE AT THIS TIME. THIS IS NOT TO PRECLUDE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION ONCE PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS ARE MADE. CONCERNING JORDANIAN SIDE, WE LEAVE TO GOJ'S AND EMBASSY'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JUDGMENT WHO MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE.

8. WITH ABOVE IN MIND, WE PROPOSE THAT AD HOC WORKING GROUP PLANNING PROCEED WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, AND THAT WE LOOK TOWARD A MEETING SOME TIME IN MAY OR JUNE (AFTER CONCLUSION OF KING HUSSEIN'S LATE APRIL VISIT TO US). REQUEST EMBASSY COMMENTS AND GOJ REACTION TO SUCH AN APPROACH. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ASSESSMENT OF GOJ COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH EMPHASIS ON PRIVATE SECTOR, AND WHETHER USG EFFORTS TO INCREASE US PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE ACTIVELY ENDORSED AND SUPPORTED.

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